

THE  
State and Importance  
OF THE  
PRESENT CONTROVERSY,  
About the VALIDITY of  
**LAY-BAPTISM,**

Fairly Represented :

*In a LETTER to the Author of*  
**Lay-Baptism Invalid.**

In which is shewn,  
The Unreasonableness of the Clamours, and the  
Weakness of the Arguments, which are brought  
by those who would make all LAY-BAPTISM  
absolutely Null and Void.

Occasioned by  
The severe Reflections made in several of their  
Writings; and particularly in *A Letter from*  
*a Priest of the Church of England, and Rector*  
*of a Church in the City of London: And in*  
*The Bishop of Oxford's Charge, Consider'd.*

By a Country CLERGY-MAN.

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Stationers-Hall. 1713.

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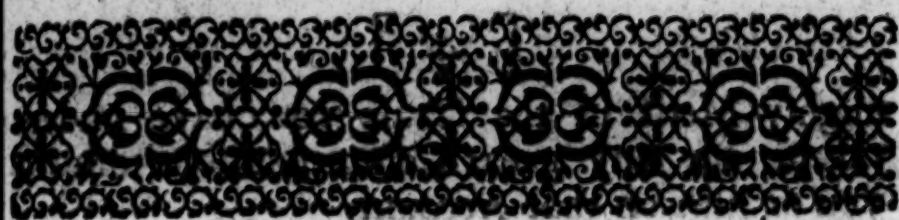
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LONDON, Printed by J. B. B. at the  
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SIR,



Knowing the fervent Zeal you have in this Controversy; I see, methinks, with what Smiles and Pleasure you read the Compliments and Applauses of a late Letter to you, from a Priest of the Church of England, and a Rector of a Church in the City of London. You are there set off as a mighty Champion in the Cause of God and his Church, and are represented to have done gloriously in their Defence, and several fine things therein are said of your great Attainments. I have no Inclination to say any thing mortifying to you on this last Head, let your Attainments shew themselves by your Performances. I shall only break in so far upon your Joy, as to shew you, and the Gentleman who wrote you this Letter, that there is none of this

mighty Merit in the Cause you have undertaken, nor any great Commendations due to you or him on that Account.

His first Sweetnings are, when he tells you,  
 Pag. 3. That *the Grateful Resentments he entertains, are, as he believes and hopes, in conjunction with the most, at least the most Learned and Orthodox of his Brethren.* What is this but to make Mens Thoughts of this Controversy the Test of their Learning and Orthodoxy; and then to tell the World, That your Adversaries in it are Few, Unlearned, and Unsound in Principles? Thus the Arrogant of Old, *We are*  
 Psal. xii. 4. *they that ought to speak: We have found out*  
 Job xxxii. *Wisdom.* But let this Reverend Rector consider, that the Reflection will not fall on the Bishops and Clergy of this Age alone, who differ from him and you in this Matter, but on the Chief, if not All of our First Reformers, and on many of the Greatest and Best of those Divines who have Vindicated and Supported the Reformation. Let him think of those Great Names *Cranmer, Ridley, Parker, Whitgift, Bilson, Bancroft, Hooker, Abbott, Mason, Cosins, Fell, Thorndike*; to mention no more. Ask your Friend, whether these, who were all of them of quite different Sentiments from you, in this Controversy, must be reckon'd the least Learned, or the least Orthodox of the *English* Clergy? Ask him, if he is willing to throw Dirt on their Characters, to Ingratiate himself with you? Or how was that consistent with Learning, and Knowledge, and Soundness of Judgment in Ages past, which becomes so great a Blemish now? Think you what you please, and bespatter their Characters according to the best of all your Skill; yet, may my Name have a Place, even the meanest Place, among these



these Great and Good Men, so much now despised; rather than with yours, notwithstanding all the Applauses which this Reverend Gentleman so lavishly bestows upon you.

But what is all this great Acclamation for? It is, he tells you, for *that Justice and Piety*, Pag. 3, 4. *which, by the Grace of God, you have so happily declar'd towards our Mother the Church of England, towards the Universal Church, and towards the Redeemer, Head and Protector of it, our Saviour Christ, in Asserting the Divine Institution of his Holy Sacraments.* — This is certainly very well, and highly commendable. But is this Praise due only to you, or your Friends and Abettors in this Controversy? Have not your Adversaries and Opposers in it both *the Justice, and Piety, and the Grace of God, to declare, as heartily as you can, for our Mother the Church of England, and for the Universal Church, and Christ the Head of it, in Asserting the Divine Institution of his Holy Sacraments?* When you have proved that they have not, I dare promise you to give up the Cause, and am willing that they shall then be abandoned, as wanting either Learning, or Soundness of Judgment, or both. But 'till you have made good the Charge, I hope the World will not think that this Cause must be carried, by Boasting, and Assuming Pretences.

But to come close to the Business. What this Reverend Gentleman so mightily applauds in you, is, your having *asserted the Necessary Efficacy and Validity of the Sacraments in our Holy Orders and Administrations.* Or, to be more Particular; your asserting the Divine *Episcopal-Ordination* of the Minister to be so *Essential* to the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, as that no Baptism can be Valid that is administred  
by



by one who is not in Episcopal Orders; and that all Persons so *Washed*, as you call it, ought to be *Baptized by a Lawful Minister*; which we call, being Baptized again. This is your Doctrine, and this is what your Reverend Friend so highly approves and commends in you.

But does the Church of *England* require us to assert such Things as these, in Proof of our *Justice* or *Piety* towards her? Or does the Universal Church, or Christ Himself, require them? When either you or your Friends have made this appear, I'll acknowledge all these Praises due to you. But until then, I cannot but think your Reverend Friend too free in his Compliments,

Page 10.

The Occasion of this Gentleman's making you all these fine Speeches, was, upon his Publishing, in a very few empty Pages, the *Judgment of the Reformed in France and Geneva, and of Mr. Calvin, concerning the Invalidity of Lay-Baptism*: That what you have asserted concerning Baptism, may not be thought a singular and new Opinion, but — agreeable to the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Church, and to the Sense of our best Reformed. I hope, after all his boasted *Justice and Piety* towards the Church of England, he does not intend the Protestant Churches of *France and Geneva* to be the best Reformed? And yet I believe they are the only Reformed Churches that he can produce favouring his Opinion. How far their Authorities are for him, may be consider'd in its proper Place. I am now chiefly concerned with the great Strefs that is laid on this Controversy, which is represented of such vast Importance: As tho'

Page 8, 9.

the Divine Institution of the Holy Sacraments; the Sacred Powers of the Christian Ministry; the great Concerns of our Profession, and all the good

good things which are so much for the Benefit of the Clergy, and so Glorious for the Church of God, were at Stake. Would not one, from these Expressions, be apt to think that these Gentlemen were Writing against Deists, or Antiscriptural Libertines, and Free-thinkers, rather than in a Controversy in which, to speak modestly, some of the Greatest and Best Divines of several Churches, and in several Ages, have been of a contrary Judgment from them? But this is one of the great Artifices, to possess your Readers with an huge Opinion of the Importance of your Doctrine, and of the Formidable Apprehensions which they ought to have of your Opposers. This has gain'd you more Profelytes than all the Force of your Arguments. For as it's much easier to Frighten People with Dismal Stories of the Dangers of the Church, than to find them out: So, many Well-meaning Persons easily run into a Cause that carries the Appearance of so many good Things as are here pretended, who are not able, or not careful enough, to Examine, whether the Pretences are Well-grounded, or no: And so are carried away, by an ungoverned Zeal, or Fear; without any accurate Judgment or Knowledge of the true Merits of the Cause.

For this reason, I have now taken it in hand; with a design,

I. To State the Question in Debate truly, and fairly; together with the Principles and Doctrines allowed as good on either hand.

II. To Examine the Force of the chief Arguments and Allegations; and then leave the Impartial Reader to Judge; and, upon a fair View of the Whole, to Determine, whether he can find any



any of those Dreadful Consequences, and Formidable Dangers to Christianity, to the Church of God, to the Christian Sacraments, and to the Christian Priesthood, that you, Gentlemen, seem to be afraid of, if either Lay-Baptism or Dissenters Baptism should be allowed Valid.

I. In Stating the Question, you know, Sir, very well,

1. That the Controversy is not about the Divine Institution of the Christian Sacraments, or of the Christian Priesthood. And therefore, all your Outcries and Clamours of this kind, to speak softly of them, are very Impertinent. You know, Sir, in your own Conscience, and so do all your Party, that those who have appeared against you in this Dispute, do affirm and teach, as well as you, or any of your Abettors, That the Christian Sacraments are of Divine Institution from our Lord Jesus Christ: That the Christian Ministry is so too: And that in all our Sacred Ministrations, we do act in the Name and by the Authority of Jesus Christ.

2. You know also, That the Dispute is not about the Ministers peculiar Right and Privilege to or in these Sacred Ministrations. You cannot deny, but that we assert, as strenuously as you, That the Lawful Minister, in all Ordinary Cases, is the only Proper, Lawful Administrator of Christian Baptism: That none else ought in any-wise to be permitted or allowed to Administer it, except in Cases of great Necessity; which has in several Churches been allowed: And that whoever shall take upon them this Office, except in such Extraordinary-allowed Cases, are Usurpers of the Sacred Powers of the Priesthood, and guilty of a very

great



great Sin. Load then the *Usurpers* of these Holy Offices with great Guilt, in such their Usurpations, as freely as you please; you shall not find us making any Apologies in Vindication of their Evil Practice. And therefore I think there was no need of all these heavy Outcries and Exclamations against us; as tho' we were betraying all the Divine Rights and Privileges of the Clergy. For you know, again,

See the  
City Re-  
ctor's Let-  
ter, p. 5.

3. That whatever Efficacy or Validity we allow in such Usurped Ministrations; yet we condemn them, as *Irregular* and *Unlawful*. And, for ought that you yet know to the contrary, we are ready to Concur in any such Proper Methods to prevent these Usurpations, as may consist with the known Doctrines and Usages of the Primitive Church, and of the Church of *England*. In short, Sir, you all know very well,

4. *Lastly*, That the True State of the Question, concerns the Persons Baptized; and that it is, Whether a Person Baptized by One who is not a *Lawful Minister*, is *Validly* and *Effectually* Baptized, or no? Whether the Administrator of that Sacrament, not being a *Lawful Minister*, makes the Baptism *Null* and *Void*, and necessarily requires that Person to be Baptized again? This, I hope, you will allow to be the Present State of the Controversy, Fairly and Impartially represented. In which, you find, we allow, That the Ministration may be *Unlawful* and *Sinful*, when performed by an arrogant Usurper, in a Case of no Necessity, but by an impious *Invasion* of the Priest's Office; and yet the Sacrament may be *Valid*, as to the Person Baptized. Because, altho' the Minister, by the Institution of Christ, has the only *Right* of this Ministration, in all

Ordinary Cases ; yet we look on this to be a Divine Law of Discipline and Order, and that his Power is not hereby made Essential to the Sacrament. So that the Decisive Question, in all this Controversy, is, Whether, by Christ's Institution of this Holy Sacrament, the Minister's Office and Authority be a Matter of *Christian Discipline and Order* only, or an *Essential Part* of this Divine Ordinance ? If it be a Divine Law of Christian Discipline only, then we have the better of it in this Cause ; in that a *Defect* of this kind will not make the Baptism *Null and Void*, nor require the Person Baptized by a Lay-man to be Baptized again ; however *Sinful* that Lay-man's *Usurpation* of the Sacred Office may be. If, on the other hand, you have proved, or can prove it to be, an *Essential Part* of Baptism ; then a Defect of this kind must be allowed to make that Baptism *Null* ; and require all Persons so Baptized, to be Baptized again. This is the main Matter now in Dispute : And therefore I am now,

II. To Examine the Force of the Arguments and Allegations brought on each Side, and to leave the Reader to Judge of them as he sees meet.

The main Strength of your Plea, to prove the Minister's Office and Authority *Essential* to Christian Baptism, is this ; That *as all Sacraments must have their Validity and Efficacy from the Institution and Commission of Christ ; so every thing directed in this Institution or Commission, thereby becomes Essential*. And consequently, *every thing done against any Part of the Institution or Commission, thereby becomes Null and Void, and of no Validity or Effect*. This

[ 11 ]

This is the full Substance of your Argument : To support which *Mathematically*, and to give it the Force of *Demonstration*, as you think ; you give us, first, *Definitions* ; then, *Axioms* ; and from thence form your *Propositions*, and your *Demonstrations* upon them ; that all may seem irrefragably Conclusive. This is a good way of Arguing, if you secure every Link of your Chain to hold fast : But if any of the first main Links fail you, all the rest will do you but little Service. And this, I am verily persuaded, is the Truth of your Case. *Ex. gr.*

Your 2<sup>d</sup> Definition, which is to teach us what makes an *Essential*, runs thus : *The Essential Parts of a Divine Positive Institution, are those which we are obliged constantly to observe, as long as the utmost Duration of the Force and Obligation of the Institution itself.* I presume, you intend all those Things, which, by the Institution, are to be constantly observed, are thereby made *Essential* ; or else it will do you no good. From this General Definition of *Essentials*, you proceed to prove the *Divine Authority of the Administrator of Baptism* to be an *Essential Part* of that Sacrament ; by proving, that it is constantly to be Observed, as long as the utmost Duration of the Force and Obligation of the Divine Positive Institution of Christian Baptism. This I take to be the Whole of your Argument, in its full Force and Strength. I hope I have not set your Reasoning in any obscurer Light than you yourself have done ; and I am sure, I have not designedly diminished the Force of it.

I did once think, not to have entred so far into the *Merit* of this Cause, as you call it ; believing that it would have been sufficient to shew the World, how contrary this your

*Lay-Bapt.  
Invalid,  
p. 2. In-  
troduct.*

*Page. 15.*



Doctrine is to the known Doctrine and constant Practice of the *Church of England*; which, tho' it has always asserted the Minister's peculiar *Right* and *Privilege* herein, yet has never made his *Authority Essential*.

\* *Prof. Ep.*  
to the *Cat.*  
of *Doct.*  
*Grabe's*  
*MSS. p.*

† *Bishop of*  
*Oxford's*  
*Charge*  
*Consider'd,*  
*p. 55, 56.*

‡ *Pag. 8.*

But I find, that both you and your Abettors, glory in the impregnable Force of your Arguments. Dr. *Hickes* says, \* *We have proved the Minister's Authority to be Essential*. You say,

† *The Opposers have not yet done any thing that can overthrow your Propositions*: The first of

which is, That the Commission or Authority of the Minister, is an Essential Part of the Institution of Baptism. And your Reverend Priest and City Rector tells you, ‖ *Your Successor has been equal to your Wishes and Endeavours*. Thus you would seem to ride Triumphant.

But with whatever Air of Assurance you may think fit to Write, the World looks on it as pretty Pert and Forward, for a Lay-man to attack the Bishops of the Church, as giving Unjust and Wrong Instructions to their Clergy, and as setting Rules, which, you say, you have before proved to be false ones.

I hope the Lord Bishop of *Oxford* continues abundantly Satisfy'd and Pleas'd with the Reasonableness and Justice of his Charge, notwithstanding all your Reflections upon it. I am sure His Lordship has Reason so to do. For, after all your great Boasting of your effectual Proof, I hope I shall shew you, that you have Proved nothing of what you pretend to; but that your Arguments are Trifling, and your pretended Reasons not Conclusive; and that the very Foundations which you lay, are Rotten, and not able to support them.

I. Your Go

1. Your *Definition of Essentials* is not Good, tho' the main Thing that you ought to have been sure of.

2. Your Particular Application of it to the Administrator of Christian Baptism, is not conclusive to your Purpose. And,

3. *Lastly*, The Judgment and Practice of the Church of England, and of the Primitive Church, are undeniably against you. These are the Three Things that I would earnestly recommend to your future Considerations.

1. Your *Definition of Essentials* is not Good. This is so main a Point, that you ought not to have failed in it, because all your *Propositions* and *Demonstrations* are built upon it; and therefore if this be faulty, all the rest you are good for nothing. Your *Definition of Essentials*, is, *Those Things which we are obliged constantly to Observe, as long as the utmost Duration of the Force and Obligation of the Institution.* Now, if I can produce any Instances of such Things in a Positive Institution, which, by the Tenor of it, ought to be constantly Observed in it; and yet, when wanting, that Defect does not make Null or Invalid that Institution; then your Definition will be found Unjust and Untrue. For it will from hence undeniably follow, That every thing Prescribed in a Positive Institution, altho' to be constantly Observed, does not thereby alone become Essential, as your Definition affirms and declares it to be.

To set this Argument in the clearer Light, it may not be amiss to observe in General, That the Holy Scripture teaches us to make a difference in the several Laws and Precepts of God, both as to their Importance and the Extent

tent of their Obligation, according to the Subject-Matter they are about. As for Example :

1. Some of them are about Things of themselves Intrinsically Good : Which are not therefore only Good, because Commanded ; but rather therefore Commanded, because Essentially and Intrinsically Good. And these are of Universal and Everlasting Obligation ; which can never buckle to any Exigencies of Time or Place : As, that God is to be Loved, and Feared, and Worshipped, &c.

2. Others are meer Positive Laws ; where God requires such Things to be done, which having no Intrinsic or Moral Excellency in themselves, receive all their Obligation from the Authority of God's Command. Now these are sometimes, and in some measure, Controlled and Over-ruled by the former. As the Jews Obligation, to Rest from all manner of Work on the Sabbath-Day, was superseded and ceased whenever Work became necessary to the Preservation of Man or Beast. Works of Mercy as Duties of Natural Religion, Over-ruled in such Cases, the Obligations of the meer Positive Command. But then, again,

3. These Positive Commands were of Two sorts ; and either had respect to,

1. Such Things as were made thereby Positive Duties of Religion ; as, Circumcision, Sacrifices, the Sabbath, &c. Or,

2. Such as related chiefly to the Manner how those Duties were to be Performed ; viz. at such a Place, on such a Day, at such an Hour, by such Persons, in such Habit, and with such Gesture, or other Rites, as Directed.

Now the Use that I would make of all this is, to Observe from it, That altho' God, under



*Levitical Dispensation*, gave Particular  
 Laws, as to the Manner of Performing all Du-  
 ties, almost in all respects, as to Time, Per-  
 sons, Places, Habits, and the like: And altho'  
 these Divine Laws were to be Strictly and  
 conscientiously Observed, that Divine Offices  
 might be Regularly and Orderly Performed;  
 yet these Laws were looked on rather as Di-  
 vine Laws of Discipline, than as *Essentials* of  
 the said Institutions. And the Defects herein,  
 tho' when proceeding from Profane Neglect,  
 and Contempt, were severely Punished in the  
 offenders; yet they did not always make the  
 Institution Null and Void, as to their Efficacy  
 and Spiritual Benefit.  
 Now, among several Instances that might be  
 produced to make good this Observation, I  
 shall only mention One or Two; from whence,  
 I think, I shall prove sufficiently your Defini-  
 tion of *Essentials* Faulty. And One is this:  
 That was a Part of the Institution of *Circumcision*,  
 that the Child should be Circumcised on the  
 Eighth Day from its Birth: *He that is Eight* Gen. xvii.  
*Days old shall be Circumcised among you.* And, 12.  
*When a Woman bring forth a Male-Child, in the* Lev. xii.  
*Eighth Day the Flesh of his Fore-skin shall be* 2, 3.  
*Circumcised.* This is a Part of the Positive In-  
 stitution that was to be constantly Observed, as  
 long as the utmost Duration of the Force and  
 obligation of the Law of *Circumcision*. And yet  
 I shall prove to you, That this was not so  
 essential, as that a Defect in that Part, made  
 the Sacrament of *Circumcision* Null and Void.  
 I can prove this, then here is *Demonstration*  
 to you, That every thing Prescribed by Al-  
 mighty God in a *Positive Institution*, and In-  
 dented and Commanded to be constantly Ob-  
 served, does not thereby become *Essential*. And  
 con-

consequently, your Definition of Essentials faulty and good for nothing.

Now I believe few People can doubt, but that there were Thousands of Children among the *Jews*, who, by the Neglect of their Parents were not Circumcised 'till after the Eighth Day and yet can hardly be denied to have received Valid Circumcision, notwithstanding that Defect. But because I will not build my Proof on Conjectures, I will produce you an undeniable Example.

Exod. iv. 24. When *Moses* was going from *Midian* to his Brethren in *Egypt*, in the Way the Lord met him and sought to kill him; because he had with him his Son whom he had neglected to Circumcise according to the Law; as all Interpreters agree, from the following Words: *Zipora* his Wife took and Circumcised the Child, and so God's Wrath was appeased; which shews that the Circumcision was Valid and Effectual.

Now, from this Passage, Two Things are to be Observed. (1.) A great Irregularity committed, and against the express Command of God: And yet that Irregularity does not, as you pretend it should, make a Nullity and Invalidity in the Ordinance. (2.) Here is Part of a Positive Institution and Sacrament and of as Lasting and Perpetual Force and Obligation as the Sacrament itself, at the same time, proved not to be Essential; because, Defect therein, did not make that Sacrament of Circumcision Null and Void. And if you gain these Two Points upon you, 1st, That every Part of a Positive Institution or Sacrament, that ought to be constantly Observed does not thereby become Essential; and 2dly, That every Irregularity committed in a Divine Ordinance, altho' against the express Law

Diff. Bapt.  
Null, Pref.  
p. vi.



Law of God, does not make that Ordinance Null and Void, and Invalid : The main Supports of your Cause fail you, and your whole Fabric must fall to the Ground : And I think the Passage produced proves them both incontestably.

Don't think to Reply to me here, by saying, That the Time of Circumcising a Child was but a Circumstance of little Moment, in Comparison to the Divine Authority of the Administrator, who represents God, by whom the Supernatural Benefits are administered. For when you have said all you can ; if God, in Positive Institutions, gives Laws of lasting Obligation about Circumstantial, as well as about Essential, it from thence follows undeniably, That all Things Commanded in a Positive Institution are not Essential. And if your Definition fails you, what will become of all your fine Propositions and Demonstrations ?

As to what you may say, about the Divine Authority of the Administrator being a Matter of another Nature, and of greater Moment, as representing God, by whom the Supernatural Benefits of the Institution are administered to us : Reply, That all this must be determined by God's own Laws and Ordinances ; and will not justify us, in making the Administrator's Office and Authority Essential, unless we can prove that God himself has made them so. But my second Instance against your Definition is of that very Kind you insist on, The Divine Administrator of a Positive Ordinance. By the Law of Moses, the Priest only was Appointed and Authorized to Flay the Burnt-Offerings. Lev. i. But in the Reign of Hezekiah, because that 5, 6. the Priests were too few, so that they could not 2 Chron. Flay all the Burnt-Offerings, therefore their Brethren, the Levites, did help them to Flay them, xxix. 34.



v. 36.

'till the Work was ended; and until the other Priests had sanctified themselves. Here is a Part of a Divine Positive Law appropriating such Work to the Priest, and that was to have been constantly Observed, Violated in a Case of Necessity: And yet that Irregularity does not Null the Ordinance. For the Jews plainly look'd on these as Valid Sacrifices. *Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the People, that God had Prepared the People.* Here is a *Burnt-Offering* Prepared by such *Administrators*, as, by the Law of the Institution, could have no Divine Authority to that Ministration. Now, if this was a Valid Sacrifice; this proves, That the Appointment of the Administrator in a Divine Positive Institution, does not make his *Authority Essential*. This leads me to shew,

2. That your Application of this Definition to the particular Case of the *Administrator of Christian Baptism*, is not at all Conclusive to your Purpose. Every Part or Law of a Positive Institution, however constantly to be Observed, does not, as we have seen already thereby become Essential. What is to be said then, more particularly, to make the Divine Authority of the Administrator of Christian Baptism Essential? You offer several Considerations under this Head; as, 1. What was Instituted and Practised under the Law. 2. Christ's not taking upon him his Office until he was Particularly Commissioned. 3. The Words and Institution of Christian Baptism. 4. The Benefits thereof, not to be bestowed but by the Mediation of those who have Authority and Commission thereto. 5. The Constant Practice of the Primitive Church. 6. The Doctrine and Practice of the Church of England in particular. But as you yourself pretend to prove

*Invalid. of  
Lay-Bapt.  
p. 15.*

*Ibid. p. 32.*

no more, by all these Arguments and Authori- Pag. 15.  
 ties, than, That *the Divine Authority of the*  
*Administrator*, was intended, by the Institution  
*of Christian Baptism*, to be constantly Observed ;  
 which, in all Ordinary Cases, will be Granted  
 you, without any troublesome Proof. This  
 does not reach your Purpose : Because, as we  
 have seen already, that God does sometimes  
 give Laws of Discipline and Order, as well as  
 about the Essentials of his Divine Ordinances.  
 From hence it follows, as plain as any Demon-  
 stration in Mathematics, That all Things di-  
 rected in the Laws of a Positive Institution, do  
 not, by that alone, become Essential to the  
 Duty to be Performed. There must therefore  
 be some Peculiar Reason alledg'd, either from  
 the Nature of the Thing in general, or some-  
 thing particularly Declaratory of God's Inten-  
 tion herein, to prove the Thing directed to be  
 Essential.

You set forth, indeed, very truly, with what  
 great Severity, under the Law of *Moses*, *Corah*,  
*Saul*, *Uzzias*, and all the Invaders of the  
 Priesthood, were Punished by Almighty God ; Pag. 17.  
 who would not accept of his own Appointments,  
 when Profaned by Uncommissioned Hands : And, Pag. 32.  
 how impossible it is that God should bestow his  
 Spiritual Benefits, by the Mediation of Those to  
 whom he has given no Authority for that Purpose.

But you should remember, Sir, That not-  
 withstanding all this Vengeance was executed  
 upon the Invaders of the Priesthood ; yet  
 Jewish Sacraments were all that while admi-  
 nistered by Those who were not Priests, nor had  
 any particular Divine Commission or Authority  
 for the doing of what they did. So that the *Spiri-*  
*tual Benefits* of that Covenant were bestow'd and  
 communicated by the *Ministration* of Those to  
 whom



whom God gave no exprefs Divine Commission or Authority for that Purpose. Thus Circumcision, the Sign and Seal of the Jewish Covenant, the Instituted Rite of Initiation into God's Church, and the Pledge of Supernatural Advantages, was not Commanded to be Performed either by Priest or Levite; but was left at Liberty to be done either by the Father, or any other Skilful Person. And the Paschal Lamb, which was a Sacrifice Offered unto God, was yet Offered, not by the Priest, but, by the Head of the Family where it was to be Eaten. How then will it appear, that the Divine Authority of the Administrator of a Sacrament is Essential to the Validity of it; when, for Two thousand Years together, Sacraments were administered without any such exprefs Authority or Commission appropriating them to the Priests? If you say, That, under the Gospel, Christ has, in the Institution of Baptism, Appointed the Lawful Administrator, and his Office; which, in Circumcision, He left Unappointed: I granting you that; yet still it remains a Question, Whether the Administrator's Divine Office and Authority are Essential, or Matter of Discipline only? And while you have not produced any one Reason, or Authority, that comes up to this, which is really the true Point in Controversy and Debate; there is this Considerable against you, That, under the Law, Sacraments were Administred by Persons who had no such exprefs Commission or Appropriating Designation to their Office. Which shews, (1.) That it is not Necessary nor Essential to a Sacrament in General, that the Administrator should always Act by the Authority of an Exprefs Commission; for the Jewish Sacraments had none such. And therefore, (2.) It leaves

Vid. Le  
Clerc in  
Numb.

ix. 7.

Menoch.

Rep. Jud.

l. 3 cap. 3.

§ ix.



is more reasonably to conclude, That the Power and Authority which the Christian Minister is Invested with, by the Institution of *Baptism*, is Matter of *Religious Discipline* only, but not in all Cases *Essential* to the *Validity* of it. Because a Sacrament in General, does not necessarily require a Divine Authority in the Administrator to give it *Validity*.

I don't know, but that you may cry out here, as you have done elsewhere, That this Way of Reasoning *smells Rank of Fanaticism*. For, sometimes, *Invectives* supply the want of *Arguments*. If you should, I will defend myself from all such *Odious Imputations*, by shewing you,

3dly and Lastly, That the Judgment and Practice of the *Church of England*, and of the *Primitive Church*, are against you; and exactly agreeable to what I have now laid before you.

1. I begin, First, with the Judgment and Practice of the *Church of England*. You tug and labour this Point so very hard, that it plainly shews you sensible how Just and Inevitable an Objection it will be thought against your Doctrine, not to have the *Church of England* declare in favour of you, when you pretend such mighty Zeal for that. And yet I am Astonished and Amazed, that any Man of common Integrity and common Sense should pretend the Authority and Judgment of our Church, for making the *Minister's Authority* *Essential* in *Baptism*, or for Re-baptizing Those who are not Baptized by a Lawful Minister. For,

1. You know very well, That the Rubric and Usage of the *Church of England* was such in the Reigns of *Edward VI.* and *Queen Elizabeth,*

*beth*, Permitting Lay-Persons to Baptize, in Cases of Necessity; as no Church, no Divines, could have consented to, who had believed or thought the Minister's Authority or Office to be Essential, or who had looked on them as any other than Matters of Discipline and Order.

2. You know also very well, That when the *Rubric* was Altered, and the Lawful Minister first Appointed to Administer *Baptism*; it was so far from being done with an Intention to make the Minister's Power looked on as *Essential*, that the King, and the Bishops, who made this Alteration, declared their Judgments expressly against it. King *James* himself, who particularly insisted on this Alteration, at the same time declared his Opinion positively against Re-baptizing those who had been Baptized by Lay-men: Which, sure, he could not have done if he had thought such Baptisms *Null* and *Void* and *Ineffectual* as to the *Spiritual Advantages* of that Sacrament. Reconcile your Construction of the Alteration made, with this which, you know, was the declared and avowed Judgment of those who made it, if you can; for I must own to you freely, that I cannot. Or, with what Face, or Pretences to Sincerity or Reason, can you tell the World, That the *Limiting Acts* of the Church, taken in Conjunction with her *Articles* and *Canons*, which make the Minister's *Commission Essential*; do, by Necessary Consequence, *Null* and make *Void* Unauthorized Baptisms? When those who Made and Established those *Limiting Acts*, *Canons*, &c. at the very same time expressly declared their Judgment 1. Against the Minister's Authority being *Essential*; and, 2. Against *Lay-Baptism* being made *Null* or *Void*, for want of such Divine Authority.

rity. I need not therefore follow you thro'  
 your several Quotations of the Articles, Canons  
 and Offices of our Church. They declare or  
 assert no more than what has been already  
 granted you; viz. The Divine Institution of  
 the Christian Priesthood, and their peculiar  
 Right and Privilege in all Religious Minis-  
 trations, by the Authority of Christ in all Ordi-  
 nary Cases. But they can never be said to  
 make the Minister's Office or Authority Essen-  
 tial to *Baptism*, unless you will suppose the  
 Governors of the Church to Establish that by  
 their Public Synodical Acts, which was directly  
 contrary to their own Judgment and Principles.  
 And if you will allow that, you may then make of  
 them what you please. It is therefore, methinks,  
 an infamous Prevaricating with the Sense and  
 Sanctions of the *Church*, to put such a Con-  
 struction on them, as is directly contrary to the  
 avowed and declared Sentiments of our Church-  
 Governors who made them. If *Demonstration*  
 would convince you, as you pretend, methinks  
 here it is plain enough, That the *Church*, by  
 putting the words *Lawful Minister* into the  
*Rubric*, neither did nor could intend to make  
 the Minister's Office thereby *Essential* to that  
 Sacrament: Because it was the declared Judg-  
 ment of those who made that Alteration, That  
 the Minister's Power was not *Essential*, nor  
*Baptism Null or Void, for want of it.* And  
 thus Things stood with the *Lawful Minister* in  
 the *Rubric*, but without any Pretences of his  
 Authority being made *Essential*, all the Reigns  
 of King *James* the First, and King *Charles* the  
 First; and no such thing as Re-baptizing those  
 who had had Lay-Baptism was proposed, that  
 ever yet read or heard of. Upon the Resto-  
 ration of King *Charles* the Second, you tell us,  
 That



Bp. Oxf.  
Ch. Conf.  
p. 58.

Diff. Bapt.  
Null, p. 3c.

That the *Old Law* was *erased*, and a *New one* made in *Convocation*. You mean, I find, That what Alteration was made upon the *Hampton-Court Conference* was no *Public Act* of the *Church*, because not *Confirmed* in its *Synods*, and so the *New Law* is said to be Made after the *Restoration*, because the *Synod* of 1661 *Confirmed* that Alteration, which before stood upon the *King's Authority* alone, with the *Approbation* of some of the *Bishops*. The *Consequence* of your ascribing the *New Law* to the *Synod* of 1661, is this; That then, by the *Laws* of the *Church*, a *Lay-Person* might still *Baptize*, in *Cases of Necessity*, as well during the *Reigns* of *King James*, and *King Charles*, as of *King Edward VI.* and *Queen Elizabeth*; because the *Church* had never yet, by any *Publick Act* forbid it. And consequently, all this while the *Minister's Authority* could not be look'd on by the *Church*, as *Essential to Baptism*; because the *Church* had hitherto never *Declared* against the *Lay-Man's Baptizing*, in *Cases of Necessity*. The *King* had, but the *Church* had not.

Bp. Oxf.  
Ch. Conf.  
p. 58.

Well, but what Alteration then did the *Convocation* of 1661 make? None at all. They only *Confirmed*, by their *Synodical Authority* the Alteration which *King James* had made before, without any new *Declaration* of their *Judgments*, as to its being *Essential*, or of *Discipline* only. But, say you, *The Erasing of the Old, and Establishing of the New Law*, is a good *Argument in Law*, That what is done in pursuance of the *Antiquated, Abrogated Law*, is a *Nullity* by the *New Law*, which was made to be constantly *Observed*. I Answer; This would be a good Conclusion, if every *Law* or *Constitution* of the *Church* makes the Things enjoined *Essential*. And thus you may make the *Cross*

so *Essential* to Baptism, because it is a Law of  
 Church to be constantly Observed. But if  
 that be not true, your Assertion is good for  
 nothing; because a Defect in *Essentials* only  
 makes a *Nullity*. If therefore the *Church*, upon  
 this Alteration, has made no new Declaration  
 of the *Minister's Power* being *Essential*; all  
 things continue, in this respect, just as they  
 were before. If it was in King *James's* Time  
 Rule of Discipline only, and not *Essential*,  
 continues so still. And that *Convocation* has  
 not Altered the Nature of the Thing, by add-  
 ing more Authority to the Rule; but leaves it  
 still as meer a Rule of Discipline as it was at  
 first. And that this is, in truth, the *Church's*  
 Judgment still, is demonstratively plain from  
 hence, That even, upon the *Synodical Con-*  
*firmation* of the *Rubric*, here was still no Re-  
 baptismization either Directed, or Practised, or  
 approved, until you began the Novelty.

You would have it, That the *Church* in-  
 tended, that the Persons Baptized by Lay-Men  
 should be Baptized again; because, if when the  
 Minister, upon Enquiry into the Facts of Pri-  
 vate Baptism, finds all Things done as they ought  
 to be; he is then to Receive the Child, and not  
 to Christen him again: Therefore this implies,  
 that when Things are not done as they ought  
 to be, the Minister of the Parish must, without  
 any farther Questions or Directions, Christen  
 the Child, who was only washed before. But  
 you, without either Blushing for yourself,  
 Laughing at us, attempt to put this pre-  
 tended Consequence upon us? When all Things  
 are done well, the Child is not to be Baptized  
 again; therefore, when all Things are not  
 done well, he is to be Baptized: And when a  
 Child is not Baptized by a Minister, it ought

Diff. Bapt.  
 Null, p. 36.

Bp. Oxf.  
Ch. Conf.  
p. 60.

to be Baptized again, without asking any farther Questions. Would not a Wise and Honest Man rather stay a little, to see what Directions the Church gives, when any Defects are found? Especially too, when that very Direction was given when Lay-Baptism was allowed *Valid*; and you yourself allow, that no Defect but in *Essentials* can Null the Sacrament and make it Void.

Let me beg you therefore seriously to consider what Direction the Church gives, when the *Answers* don't make it appear that all was well done. And here you will find the Rubric that Pinches you close; and that so incontrovertibly declares the Church's Sense and Judgment upon the Case, that, after all your Shuffling, Scriving, and Evading, it concludes as directly against you as any thing in Nature can be. If the Minister, upon Enquiry, 1. *Whom?* 2. *With what Matter?* and, 3. *With what Form of Words the Child was Baptized* finds such uncertain Answers given by them which bring the Infant to Church, as that it cannot appear that the Child was Baptized with Water and in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which are *Essential Parts* of Baptism then let the Priest Baptize it in the Conditional Form there appointed.

Pray, let me beg you to Consider this Rubric well, and to Answer me a few plain Questions upon it. Does any Defect in Baptism make it Void and Invalid, unless it be in the *Essential Parts*? No; you allow it. Does not also according to your own Concessions, every Defect in *Essentials* make it Null and Void? This you affirm. Why is the Child then directed to be Baptized with the Conditional Form there Prescribed, when it's found uncertain whether



it was Baptized with Water, and in the Name of the Trinity? The Rubric says, because they are *Essentials*. Why then is not the same Direction given, when it appears *uncertain* whether the Baptizer was a *Lawful Minister*, or no? If the Church had believed the *Minister's Authority* *Essential*; Why did it not give the same Directions here, as in the other Two *Essentials*? Was there not the same Reason for it? Why then are Two *Essentials* only mentioned, if Three were intended? Was not the Church's express Declaration, in this Third Case, more Requisite and more Necessary than in either of the other Two; because it had long prevailed as a received Principle, That *the Minister was not of the Essence of the Sacrament*? How does it appear, or how can it appear, that the Church has changed her Judgment in this Matter; when She has neither made any express Declaration of a contrary one, nor given the same Rule and Order in this Case, which She has given in those other Cases which She expressly declares to be *Essential*?

In short, There is no other reasonable Account to be given of the Rubric's dropping that part of the Enquiry which respects the Minister's *Lawful Authority*; and of not requiring the Baptism to be Conditionally repeated in this, as in the other Two Cases, which She declares to be *Essential*, but only this. She did not look on the *Minister's Lawful Authority as Essential* in Baptism, but only as a Law of Christian Discipline still, as it had been thought by all our Divines for a great many Years before. Her Silence in this Particular, is sufficiently declarative of Her Judgment; in that if She had been of a contrary Opinion, it was Her Duty to have Declared it, and to have given

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express

express Directions, in Her Rules, accordingly. But as She has not yet done either of these to this Day; I must conclude, That it is still the certain Judgment of the *Church of England*, That the *Minister's Authority* is not *Essential* to *Baptism*. And I think, that the constant Usage and Practice of the *Church*, in admitting Lay Baptized Persons to all our Offices and Ordinances, from the first Beginning of the *Reformation*, down to our Times, without any Re-baptization call'd for by Her Governors or Synods; is a sufficient and undeniable Confirmation of all that I have said. Exclaim then as much as you will, that this Way of Arguing smells Rank of Fanaticism: When you can shew, that this is not the true Sense of the *Church of England*, I will bear any Reproaches. But if you will put such a Sense on the *Articles*, *Canons*, *Catechism*, *Offices* and *Rubrics* of our *Church*, as are directly contrary to the avowed Principles of Those who Drew them up, and Established them, and to the Received Opinions of our Greatest Divines ever since, and as are Inconsistent with our constant Practice and Usages; Who, I pray, is it that Explains away the *Doctrines* and *Constitutions* of the *Church*, but you? And if you go on as you have begun, I don't despair but that I may find you, in a few Years, pleading, that *Transubstantiation*, and the *Mass*, are according to the *Doctrines* of the *Church of England*. Be not angry at what I say; there is as much Reason for it, as there is for what you now contend for. I will only shew you now,

Diff Bapt.  
Null, p. 24.

Bp. Oxf.  
Ch. Conf.  
p. 2.

2. That what the *Church of England* has thus Taught and Practised, is agreeable to the Sense and Usage of the *Primitive Church*,

I shall

I shall be very short here, because others have taken this Province, and prevented me; particularly Mr. Bingham, whom I believe very able to Discharge it. I will only remind you of a few Things that are very obvious, and intreat you to consider how trifling your Evasions are.

*Tertullian*, you know, is expressly against you, who makes the Minister's Authority in Baptizing, a Matter of Discipline only. *Salvo De Bapt. Ecclesie honore, — alioquin Laicis jus est:* 17.  
 The Right of Baptizing is in the Bishop; or the Presbyters and Deacons may do it, having the Bishop's Authority for it, for the sake of the Church's Honour; which being consulted, all is well done: And but for that, Lay-Men also might have a Right of Baptizing. This is so very disagreeable to you, that it must be thrown aside, as his Private Heterodox Opinion, against the Sense and Judgment of the Church. But why so? Does he stand alone in this? Is the 38th Canon of the Council of *Eliberis* also against the Sense and Judgment of the Church? that, you know, directs Lay-Men, in some Cases, and under some Limitations, to Baptize. How could those Nineteen Bishops so direct, if it had been the Received Doctrine of the Church, that the Minister's Authority is Essential? You will make these Bishops either very Ignorant or very Regardless of the Catholic Doctrine, if you so Charge them. Dr. Cave says of these Canons, That they are, *Antiquæ Virtutis & Pietatis Indices; Instances of Primitive Virtue and Piety*. And no Exception is made to the 38th. And Mr. Du Pin says, That some have look'd on these Canons, rather as a Code, or Collection of former Rules, now Confirm'd and

Hist. Lit.  
 Vol. II.  
 p. 103.



and Ratify'd by *this Council*, than as *Laws here newly made*. If so, they are, in truth, Witnesses, that the settled Judgment of the *Spanish Churches*, was, That *Lay-Baptism* is not repugnant to the *Essentials* of that *Sacrament*. As for the famous Story of *Atbanasius*, having, when a Child, Baptized other Children; and of such Baptism being allowed Effectual and Valid, by *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*: Whether the Fact be true or false, the very Relating it by the Church-Historians, as *Mr. Bingham* has well observed, shews that such Principles were not disagreeable to the Catholic Doctrine: In that if they had, they would scarce have told an uncertain Story, so much in Opposition to the Judgment of the *Church* as this must be, if the Minister's Authority had been look'd upon as Essential. And when I have added, That *St. Austin*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Ambrose*, and *Isidore of Sevil*, declare in Substance the same thing that *Tertullian* had done before; you must either suppose these Fathers ignorantly to follow him in an Error contrary to the received Doctrine of the Catholic Church; or else you must believe that the Catholic Church knew no such Doctrine, as that the Minister's Office or Authority is Essential to Baptism.

In a word, If your Definition of *Essentials* is faulty; if your pretended Arguments from it are unjust and inconclusive; if the *Church of England* has not yet by any one Law or Fact declared the *Minister's Authority* Essential to this Sacrament, nor ever look'd on it as any other than a Divine Law of Discipline; and if all this be agreeable too to the Doctrine of the *Primitive Church*: Why are you thus

thus Flattered and Admired, as tho' you were pleading the Cause of God and his Church, of his Sacraments and Ministrations; when, in truth, you are only publishing your own Inventions, and teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. You, most certainly, do nothing better than this; unless you can make it appear, that you understand the true Meaning of Christ in the Institution of Baptism, better than either our own National Church, or the Primitive Fathers and Councils.

And while these are so plainly against you, what mighty Service can you expect from the Judgment of the Protestants of France and Geneva? if you have made a true and faithful Representation of their Synodical Determinations, which I have some reason to doubt. But because I have not the History of the Proceedings and Determinations of those Synods by me, I will say nothing more of them; but speak only to Mr. Calvin's Judgment in this Case, whose Authority your Reverend City Rector pleads in favour of your Opinion. But Arch-Bishop Whitgift did not take Mr. Calvin to believe the Minister's Power Essential, when he cited his Words against that Notion, as insisted on by T. Cartwright, in his Admonition. The Words cited are these:

Now if it be true that we have set down, the Sacrament is not to be esteemed of his Hand by whom it is administred, but as it were of the Hands of God from whom it certainly cometh: Hereof we may gather, that nothing is added, or taken from the Dignity of it, by him by whom it is ministred. And therefore, among Men, if an Epistle be sent, so that the Hand and Seal be known, it skilleth not who or what manner

Arch-Bp.  
Whitgift's  
Defence,  
P. 519.  
Calv. Instit.  
Lib. IV.  
cap. 15.  
§ 16.

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of Person carrieth it. Even so it is sufficient for us to know the Hand and Seal of the Lord, in his Sacraments, by whomsoever they be delivered. As this was his Reasoning against the Anabaptists, who deny us to be rightly Baptized, because we were Baptized by Wicked and Idolatrous Persons in the Pope's Church; and therefore they furiously urge Re-baptization. Against whose Folly we shall be sufficiently defended, if we think that we were Baptized not in the Name of any Man, but in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy-Ghost; and therefore Baptism not to be of Man, but of God, by whomsoever it be ministred. If you think it a sufficient Reply to all this, to say, That Mr. Calvin is here speaking, not of the Ordination, but of the Worthiness of the Minister; which I own to be true in Fact: Yet, at the same time, pray consider, both his Allusion to the Carrier of a Letter, and that Baptism is to be reputed of God, which is in the Name of the Trinity, à quocunque administratus fuerit, by whomsoever it be ministred: And you will find these Reasons to reach the Authority, as well as the Worthiness of the Minister. But if this will not satisfy you, I will give you Mr. Calvin's Judgment on the Case very impartially, and make your best of it. It is delivered in one of his Epistles, in Answer, as appears, to some such Question as this; How far the Baptism of Those, who, under the Papacy, were Baptized by Lay-Men, was to be allowed of, and the Practice to be imitated? And his Determinations run thus: *Quia nemo Privatus Baptismi Legitimus est Minister, huic malo severe occurrendum esse, quia manifesta est Baptismi profanatio. Et quoniam hic mos perversus ex superstitione*

Calv. Epist.  
Ed. Amst.  
1667.  
p. 209.



itione traxit originem, dum salutis necessitas  
 signo affixa fuerit, eo minus duplex fovendum  
 est malum. Dubitanter hac de re loquitur Au-  
 gustinus. Si quispiam Privatus baptizet, ubi  
 cogit necessitas, aut nullum est, aut veniale de-  
 lictum. Atqui nobis longe pluris esse debet in-  
 violabile Christi mandatum, Ite, docete, baptizate.  
 Hic nexus absque Sacrilegio solvi non potest.  
 Accedit Apostoli sententia, nemo usurpet sibi  
 honorem, sed qui vocatus est. Adulterinum  
 ergo Baptismum censemus, qui administratus est  
 privato homine. Ac in Ecclesiâ recte compositâ  
 tolerabilis non esset hæc temeritas. Sed quia  
 ad apud vos inter principia contigit, ante resti-  
 tutum Ecclesiæ Ordinem, & rebus adhuc con-  
 fusis; non tantum Errori danda est venia, sed  
 ferendus est qualiscunque Baptismus, modo ne  
 in exemplum trahatur, quod semel perperam  
 institutum est. Nam in Ecclesiâ dissipatione multa  
 Deus condonat quæ nullo modo admittere fas  
 esset in Ecclesiâ bene ordinatam. Olim cum  
 vitata esset Religio, haud dubiè multis vitiis &  
 corruptelis implicita Circumcisio fuit; quam  
 tamen iteratam fuisse non legimus; quum revo-  
 caretur populus ad purum cultum, ergo anxie  
 disquirere necesse non est, ac ne expedit quidem,  
 in omnes Circumstantias quæ innumeros scru-  
 pulos gignerent. Proinde quod ignovit Deus  
 sub Papatu, nos quoque sepeliamus. Nunc ubi  
 de vero Baptismi usu admonita fuerit Ecclesiâ,  
 quod pugnaret cum Christi institutione pro nihilo  
 dicendum esset, ac de integro baptizandus, qui pol-  
 lutus fuerit profanâ aspersione. These are his  
 Words; and I will make my Remarks upon  
 them, as I give you them in English. As  
 they were at that time miserably pester'd with  
 the Anabaptists, who denied the Divine Insti-  
 tution of the Christian Ministry, and their

Divine Right and Privilege in their Ministrations, and affirmed every Private Man to have an Equal Authority with them in their Holy Offices; Mr. Calvin took great Care to expresse his Detestation of those impious Opinions: And accordingly, 1. He declares, *That as no Private Person is the Lawful Administrator of Baptism, they were strictly to oppose that Evil Practice, as a manifest Profanation of Baptism.* That as this Irregular Custom had its Original from the Superstition of the Papists, while the necessary Salvation of the Person was tack'd inseparably to the Ordinance; (tho' in this he is somewhat mistaken, for the Primitive Church had other Thoughts;) that Two fold Error was the less to be countenanced. 2. He owns, That St. Austin speaks doubtfully of this Matter; If any Private Person Baptized One in a Case of Necessity, it was either no Fault at all, or a very Pardonable one. But we ought to have greater Regard to the Command of Christ, Go Teach; Baptize: Which Tie cannot, without Sacrilege, be loos'd. Add to this the Apostle's Saying, That so no Man taketh this Office to himself, but he that is Called. Therefore we think that Baptism to be Sinful, or Counterfeit, which is Administred by a Lay-Man; and in a Well-constituted Church this Rashness is not to be suffered. All this he has said in Vindication of the Minister's Right to the Ministration of this Sacrament against Those who denied it. But, that he could not esteem the Minister's Right absolutely Essential, is plain, by what follows. For he adds, 3. But seeing it has prevail'd as a Principle among you, before the Reformation of the Church, and while Things were in Confusion, (he might have added, and in Primitive

Adulte-  
rinum.



primitive Times also, that Lay-Men might Baptize, in Cases of Necessity,) *this Mistake is not only to be pardoned, but any Baptism to be admitted, so that the Irregularity be not pleaded as a Precedent.* Could any Man alive say this, who thought the Minister's Office so Essential, as that the Baptism was Invalid, and communicated no Spiritual Advantages, without the Divine Authority of the Administrator? But he goes on: For in the Distresses of the Church, God Pardons many Things that are not to be admitted of in one well Regulated. Heretofore, when Religion was corrupted, no doubt but there were many Corruptions in Circumcision also; yet we do not find that it was Repeated, when the People returned to the Pure Worship. Therefore every Irregularity in a Divine Positive Law, does not make it Void. 4. In the following Words, he would not have Men to be Scrupulous and Uneasie upon Defects in Circumstantials: *Which it is therefore neither Necessary, nor Expedient, to be too Anxious in our Enquiries about* Circumstances, that may raise innumerable Scruples. If the Administrator of Baptism be one of those Circumstances that he intended; then its plain, that Mr. Calvin esteemed that rather a Circumstantial, than an Essential Part of Baptism. And therefore, what God winked at under the Papacy, let us also pass by. But he had, indeed, so much Zeal against Those, who, out of a Spirit of Profaneness, Despised and Denied the Minister's Right to these Ministrations; that what they did, out of an impious Contempt of the Ministry, he thinks, should go for Nothing. Now that the Church is instructed in the true Use of Baptism, what is repugnant to Christ's Institution is to be ac-



Divine Right and Privilege in their Ministrations, and affirmed every Private Man to have an Equal Authority with them in their Holy Offices; Mr. Calvin took great Care to express his Detestation of those impious Opinions: And accordingly, 1. He declares, *That as no Private Person is the Lawful Administrator of Baptism, they were strictly to oppose that Evil Practice, as a manifest Profanation of Baptism. That as this Irregular Custom had its Original from the Superstition of the Papists, while the necessary Salvation of the Person was tack'd inseparably to the Ordinance; (tho' in this he is somewhat mistaken, for the Primitive Church had other Thoughts;) that Twofold Error was the less to be countenanced.* 2. He owns, *That St. Austin speaks doubtfully of this Matter; If any Private Person Baptized One in a Case of Necessity, it was either no Fault at all, or a very Pardonable one. But we ought to have greater Regard to the Command of Christ, Go Teach; Baptize: Which Tie cannot, without Sacrilege, be loos'd. Add to this the Apostle's Saying, That so no Man taketh this Office to himself, but he that is Called. Therefore we think that Baptism to be Sinful, or Counterfeit, which is Administred by a Lay-Man; and in a Well-constituted Church this Rashness is not to be suffered.* All this he has said in Vindication of the Minister's Right to the Ministration of this Sacrament, against Those who denied it. But, that he could not esteem the Minister's Right absolutely Essential, is plain, by what follows. For he adds, 3. *But seeing it has prevail'd as a Principle among you, before the Reformation of the Church, and while Things were in Confusion, (he might have added, and in Primitive*

Adulte-  
rinum.

mitive Times also, that Lay-Men might Baptize, in Cases of Necessity,) *this Mistake is not only to be pardoned, but any Baptism to be admitted, so that the Irregularity be not pleaded as a Precedent.* Could any Man alive say this, who thought the Minister's Office so Essential, as that the Baptism was Invalid, and communicated no Spiritual Advantages, without the Divine Authority of the Administrator? But he goes on: For in the Distresses of the Church, God Pardons many Things that are not to be admitted of in one well Regulated. Heretofore, when Religion was corrupted, no doubt but there were many Corruptions in Circumcision also; yet we do not find that it was Repeated, when the People returned to the Pure Worship. Therefore every Irregularity in a Divine Positive Law, does not make it Void. 4. In the following Words, he would not have Men to be Scrupulous and Uneasie upon Defects in Circumstantials: *It is therefore neither Necessary, nor Expedient, to be too Anxious in our Enquiries about Circumstances, that may raise innumerable Scruples.* If the Administrator of Baptism be one of those Circumstances that he intended; then its plain, that Mr. Calvin esteemed that rather a Circumstantial, than an Essential Part of Baptism. And therefore, what God winked at under the Papacy, let us also pass by. But he had, indeed, so much Zeal against Those, who, out of a Spirit of Profaneness, Despised and Denied the Minister's Right to these Ministrations; that what they did, out of an impious Contempt of the Ministry, he thinks, should go for Nothing. Now that the Church is instructed in the true Use of Baptism, what is repugnant to Christ's Institution is to be ac-

counted as Nothing ; and he is to be Baptized again, who has been polluted with a Profane Washing. This is his Judgment. And yet, compare it with the Concessions which he makes of the Validity of those Lay-Baptisms which had been received under the Church of Rome, and with his Reasons to that Purpose ; and I think you must own, that this Re-baptization which he is for, did not proceed from a Perswasion that the Minister's Authority was Essential, for then the Popish Lay-Baptisms also must have been Invalid, but rather to shew his great Displeasure and Zeal against Those who denied the Minister to have any Peculiar Right therein.

And after all ; it is but the Judgment of Mr. Calvin ; of One Man, and He not the best Beloved or Respected by you and your Friends. And why should not the Judgment of Tertullian, of the Council of Eliberis, of the Church of England, of Arch-Bishop Whitgift, of Mr. Hooker, or of any other such be of equal Force with us ? nay, even of Mr. R. L. when he owns, That *no Defect, but in Essentials, make the Sacrament Invalid*. But it is not to the Judgment of any One single Man that we Appeal, or are willing to be Determin'd by, in this Case. We insist on it, That the Sense and Practice of the Primitive Church in General, and of our own Good Mother the Church of England in Particular are exactly agreeable to what we Plead for, and utterly against your Novel Doctrine of Essentials. And when you can make the contrary appear, we will be willing to give up the Cause. But until you can do this, we have these following Reasons moving us to Write against you.

I. That



1. That we need not be Bug-bear'd with any clamorous Out-cries, of Betraying the *Rights and Privileges of God's Church*, and of the Christian Institutions, and the *Reverence due to the Sacraments*. All these we Assert and Contend for, as zealously as you: And it's only the *Efficacy of Baptism*, in one or two particular Cases, of *Necessity*, or *Irregularity*, that is now in Dispute. And if we can make it appear, That we set the *Right of the Christian Ministers*, and the *Power of their Ministrations*, on the very same Foot on which the *Primitive Church*, and the *Church of England*, believe *Christ* to have set them; we have no Reproaches to fear on that Account.

2. Another Reason of our appearing against you, is, Our Unwillingness to run into the great Error of *Re-baptization*, so much condemned and avoided by the Antients. Had it not been for this, their Zeal to keep up to the *White-Apostle's Doctrine of One Faith, One Baptism*; I don't see but that any considerable *Irregularity* in this Sacrament, might have vindicated its being repeated, and have made us all zealous for *Re-baptization*. But as the Antients had a very great Regard to this, in all their Determinations about these Matters, and chose rather to allow *Validity* in the Baptisms of *Lay-Men, Heretics, Schismatics, and Degraded Clergy-Men*, who did not Act by the Authority of the *Church*; I cannot but think that a *Clergy-Man* is at this Day very excusable, in having a good Share of the same Concern; and a *Church* also, if, on this score, it passes by some Things which it does not well approve; rather than run into a Practice that could not consist with the Evangelical Doctrine of *One Baptism*.

It

It was Natural enough, in such a Case, to consider what the *Essentials* of the Sacrament are: All readily agreeing, That nothing but the want of some *Essential* can Vindicate the Reiteration of that Ordinance. I know, you cannot call it *Re-baptization*, who make the *Minister's Authority Essential*. But, Sir, as you have not yet convinced us of this, we must call it, *Re-baptization*; and we must be against it as such, until you bring us better Reasons and stronger Arguments.

3. We are the more free in this Opposition to you; in that we do not do it, as has been artfully insinuated, *in Favour of the Dissenters and their Practices*. This has been the plausible Cry, to Expose Us: And, as tho' there had been no *Separatists* on your Side; none so much Disaffected to the Government, as to refuse the Oath of Allegiance, that Abett you none that Pray for an Unlawful Pretender to the Crown, that Support You: The great Artifice is, To represent Us as *pleading the Cause of the Dissenters*; and then every Man, according to the measure of his Hatred and Aversion to Them, or his Love to Some-body else Abroad, runs in presently to Your Side.

This is spreading a Net for the Injudicious and Unthinking, but it can take none else. For, must Men be charged with favouring the Errors of Heretics and Schismatics, because they do not *Invalidate* all their *Ministrations*? What then must become of all the Primitive Fathers and Councils, even of the First famous Council of *Nice*, which did not make Invalid all the Powers and Ministrations, either of the *Novatians*, *Donatists*, or *Arians*? Must they therefore be spitefully Treated and Reproached, as Countenancing *Heresy*, and Favouring *Schismatics*

safe, *etics and their Practices?* They met with  
 such Rude Treatment, on those Occasions:  
 and why then must we be traduced as Coun-  
 tenancing *Schism*, only because *Dissenters* Bap-  
 tism happens, in the *Consequences* of our  
 Church of England Doctrine, to be allowed  
 as valid?

As for your famous *Oxford* Story, of the *Bp. Oxf.*  
*Presbyterians* Carrying a Child in Public Pro- *Ch. Conf.*  
 vision to be Baptized in a *Conventicle*, since *P 73.*

*Mr. Bingham's* Book came out; it is no more  
 to be imputed to that Book, than *Noah's*  
*Arche* is to the *Building of the Ark*, because it  
 follow'd after it. *Mr. Bingham* intended no  
 such Consequences; nor do his Principles any  
 more tend thereto, than those of our greatest  
 Divines, who, ever since the *Reformation*, have  
 asserted the same thing. But whatever may  
 be the Consequences, you have supply'd us  
 with an Answer; viz. That *Divine Truths*  
 must not be set aside, by reason of any pretended  
 disagreeable Consequences that may follow them.  
 and this is a

4th Reason of our Opposition to your No-  
 tion; That if it be the Truth of God, and of  
 his Word, That the *Divine Authority* of the  
*Administrator* is not Essential to Christian Bap-  
 tism: It ought to be defended, let that Truth  
 please or displease whom it will. We ought  
 therefore, I think, to have liberty to Argue  
 the Point fairly, and without Reproaches, or  
 malicious Insinuations, as tho' we were Betray-  
 ing the Reverence due to God, his Church, and  
 Sacraments. Those Reflections are not candid,  
 or becoming either Christian Priest, or Chri-  
 stian Lay-Man.

5. If the Truth be on our Side, as I am  
 verily perswaded that it is; it will be found  
 an

See the  
 Rector's  
 Letter,  
 p. 7, 8,  
 9, 10.



an Important Truth, to the **Protestant Churches**, and the **Protestant Religion**. The Consequence of your Principle, which allows no Baptism Effectual but what is administered by a Lawful Minister, nor any Man to be a Lawful Minister but what is Episcopally Ordained; falls heavy, you know, upon the *Foreign Protestant Churches*: It makes void all their Ministry and Ministrations, all the Sacraments and Religious Ordinances; it perfectly Unchurches them, and reduces them, in your own Sense, into the Condition of mere Catechumens, if not of Heathens and Infidels. And all this, by a Notion, which, as you state it, no Church in the World ever yet came into. I don't love Challenges in Controversies because I do not pretend my Knowledge to be sufficient for them: And yet I do believe that you can produce me no Christian Church at this Day in the World which maintains, That *the Episcopal Ordination of the Administrator is Essential to the Validity of Baptism*: For tho' all the Antient Churches allowed none but Bishops to Ordain, yet they did not make the Minister's Ordination Essential to Valid Baptism. A Man of Ordinary Modesty and Reflexion would not easily pretend to such a Refined Understanding, and Accuracy of Judgment, above all that have lived and written for Seventeen hundred Years before him, as to advance such a Principle as that no Church, in any Age, is ever found to have concurred in; and which, in the Consequences of it, must entirely Unchurch almost all the *Protestant Churches* upon Earth, his own verities hardly escaping. For I can tell the Time when, according to the Laws of *our Church*, Episcopal Ordination was not Necessary to constitute a Lawful Minister. One would rather

rather be apt to suspect his own Thoughts, and to distrust his own Judgment, than to run thus far; believing that other Christians and other Churches have a Zeal for God and Christ, and a Desire of Salvation, by the Instituted Ordinances of Christianity, as well as himself; and are to be hoped, some of them at least, to have a Common Understanding of the Instituted Ordinances of Christianity, as well as himself. And this is a Point that does not concern *Heretics* and *Schismatics* alone, but the several National Churches of the World, throughout all Ages of Christianity. All of them, I think, own the Divine Institution of the Christian Ministry; and I freely own *Episcopacy* to be of *Apostolical Institution*. But I am not yet sensible of any one Church that makes both these *Essential* to the *Valid Ministration* of Christian Baptism. A Notion that makes so high a Complement to the *Papists*, as to make the greatest Number of *Protestants* not only *Heretics* and *Schismatics*, as they call them, but brings them down to *Catechumens* or *Infidels*; had need to be supported by very clear and evident Demonstrations indeed; and much more plain, than what you have hitherto found out in this Controversy. How will the *Papists* Laugh and be Pleased, to find us *Protestants* thus unconcernedly to Unchurch one another? The University of *Oxford*, tho' they had just Zeal for the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopacy*, were yet too sensible of this, to disallow the Churches of *Geneva* to be True Churches: They own them as such; they allow them to have *Lawful Pastors*, and *Valid Sacraments*, altho' they *unhappily* want the *Apostolical Form of Church-Government by Bishops*: And they own, with Approbation, the Practice of our Divines, who, in

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their

*Literæ, datæ  
Id. Febr.  
1706.*

their Exile, took part of the *Divine-Service* of the *Protestant Churches* Abroad, altho' they had no Bishops. But you and your Friends, Wiser, it seems, and more Knowing in Evangelical Institutions, than that Venerable and Learned Body ; have, by your Novelties, brought all those Churches down so very low, that no *Valid Sacraments*, no *Gospel Ordinances*, no *Church Communion*, is to be found among them. They are no *Members of Christ's Church* ; their *Religious Assemblies* not fit for a true Christian to enter into ; no *Supernatural Advantages* to be obtained in them : And however you may think it for your Purpose to appeal to their Judgment in this Case, yet you hardly allow them Christianity enough to entitle them to Christian Burial, if they happen, any of them to Die among us. If therefore there be a great deal to be said against a Principle that is of such mischievous Consequence to the *Protestant Religion* ; it is of that Importance, that it ought to be said, and to be insisted on.

6. Our *Last Reason* of Opposing you, is not the least ; *viz.* This your New Doctrine will do no mighty Service, to the bringing over *Dissenters* into our Church. It may hinder Multitudes of them from coming into our Communion ; because most People are unwilling to have their Baptism, and all their past Devotion, to go for Nothing. They may be made sensible that they have been Educated in a wrong Communion, and be willing to return into a Right one ; But when you would bring them back to the Font again, I am afraid that few will follow you. After all the *Successes* that your *City Rector* boasts of in your *Undertakings*, I have heard nothing yet of this Kind. Yourself, and a few Women who have left the *Dissenters*,



*senters*, after having lived some time in our *Communion*, have consented to be Baptized again. But when I find that your New Doctrine so far takes Place, as to cause Numbers of *Dissenters* to leave their Separation ; I will then readily give up this Part of our Justification.

But how can this be expected, when your own Arguments must return upon you ? You would have them think their *Baptism Void and Invalid*, because the *Baptizer* was not a *Lawful Minister*, which is *Essential* in that Sacrament. Will They not tell you, That the Greatest of our Divines, both at and since the *Reformation*, have ever affirmed, That *the Minister is not Essential* ? That the *Rubric and Practice* of the *Church*, under King *Edward VI.* and Queen *Elizabeth* was altogether disagreeable to that Opinion ? That altho' the *Rubric* has been Altered since, yet that was only to *Regulate Discipline*, but that the *Church* has by no Act whatsoever declared the *Minister's Office Essential* ? That the Making a Law, is one thing ; but the Making a Law *Essential*, is another ? Will they not ask you, how you can pretend to make the *Minister's Office Essential*, when, besides the express Declaration of several of our Divines to the contrary, the *Church*, instead of calling the Lay-Baptized to Baptism again, has admitted them, without Scruple, not only to Her closest Communion, but into Holy Orders, and the Greatest Stations of the Church, without any Complaint, or any Representation of this as an Error or a Miscarriage, from any of its Governors or its Synods in any Age ? How then will you convince these *Dissenters* of the Invalidity of their Baptism, without Blemishing that *Church* into whose Communion you would have them enter ; by insisting on a Doctrine

which it hitherto has never yet maintained? This is so unlikely a Method, that one had need of a great deal of Good-nature to believe that you ever intend it, and not to suspect, that you have some other Design in View.

If I was to engage in a malicious Purpose of keeping the *Dissenters* in their Schism, and of hindring them from coming into our Communion; I would take your Measures: I would embarrass their Admission with all the Difficulties that might be; I would allow none of them to be Members of the Christian Church, without a New Baptism: And I doubt not but that the Success would Answer the Malice of the Design. But, if Convincing the *Dissenters*, and bringing them into our Communion, will be allowed a good Work; that Doctrine is fittest for the Purpose, which, altho' it allows the *Validity* of their *Baptisms*, yet condemns the *Unlawfulness* of their *Ministrations*. Here we may reasonably hope for Success; in that we can easily prove their Baptisms *Irregular*, *Unlawful*, *Schismatical*, and *Sinful*, altho' not absolutely *Invalid* and *Void*. We can prove them to be *Schismatics*, altho' we cannot say that they are no *Christians*.

I leave these Considerations with you:  
And am,

SIR, Yours.

POST

## POSTSCRIPT.

S I R,

Since the Finishing this LETTER, is come out Dr. B——'s *Enquiry into the Judgment and Practice of the Catholic Church, as to Lay-baptism*: In the Appendix to which, he also calls the Lord Bishop of Oxford to Account, for his CHARGE. He does no more than, like an Echo, faintly Recite the Fag-end of your reflections. I have therefore only a few short remarks to make upon it.

1. He, with Good-manners, tells the Bishop, *Pag. 104.* that the very Doctrine of the Validity of Lay-baptism, which His Lordship defends, is the profess'd Doctrine of the Church of Rome. In Answer to which, I have only this to say, that whenever the most Learned of His Lordship's Opposers shall make it appear, that it is not the Doctrine of the Catholic Church, and of the Church of England; it shall be reckon'd no affront to have call'd it *Popery*. In the meanwhile, it is incumbent on Dr. B——, and his friends, to prove, that his Doctrine is not *Whitistannical*. For I think it will be no Advantage to Dr. B——'s Reputation, that those doctrines in which he opposes the Bishop, are either *Popish*, or else Originally taken from the *Whitists*, and were first used by them, in Opposition to the Church of England.

2. The Doctor is also unwilling to consent, *Pag. 106.* that the University of Oxford do indeed allow the Foreign Churches who have no Bishops, to have *Real Orders, and Valid Sacraments*. He will have it, that the University only thought that



that God may accept what they do with good intention, for want of Ability, or Opportunity, or Knowledge to do better. And tho' they have neither real Orders nor Sacraments, yet it is possible he may be Gracious to them —

Is not this a mighty Compliment? May not God be thus Gracious to Jews, Turks and Heathens also? I must leave it to that Venerable Body to determine, whether they intend thus to Prevaricate with their Christian Brethren. Their Words are these: *Alienissimum est à nostrâ Charitate Ecclesias illas Reformatas, quæ ineluctabili necessitatis lege adactas, à Præviam Episcopalis Regiminis formâ baud sponte se recesserunt, tanquam legitimis Pastoribus aut Sacramentis rite administratis, penitus destitutis rigidâ nimis censurâ damnare*: "It is not at all agreeable to our Charity, to condemn, with too severe a Censure, those Reformed Churches as utterly destitute of Lawful Pastors, and Sacraments duly administred; which, by inevitable Necessity, rather than by their own Choice, have receded from the Primitive Form of Episcopal Government." If there be any Probity in these Learned Gentlemen, methinks, this is fairly to confess, That to demand of them to have Lawful Pastors, and Sacraments rightly administred, would be too rigid and severe a Censure.

3. To confirm this Account of King James allowing Lay-Baptism Valid, altho' he did not approve that any but a Lawful Minister should Baptize; the same Author has observed, That King James the First's own Children were not Baptized by Ministers Episcopally Ordained but by Presbyterians. This Dr. B—— will not admit of; because, *altho' the Presbyterian Government was at that time Settled in Scotland*

there might be Ministers there Episcopally  
 ordained, and the King's Children might be Bap-  
 tized by one of them. At this rate, he may  
 doubt also whether King *James the Second's*  
 children were Baptized by Protestant Mini-  
 sters, because there might be Popish Priests in  
 England at the time of their Birth. But I  
 would rather take it for a sure Rule, That the  
 children of Princes of the Blood are alway  
 baptized by Ministers of the Established Church;  
 unless the contrary could be plainly proved.  
 4. The Last Thing observable, is, his fol-  
 lowing you in that odd Conceit, of supposing  
 Confirmation to be Valid without *Baptism*. I  
 leave you both to Reconcile it with the Sense  
 of the Primitive Church: For I take it for  
 granted, that *St. Jerom* speaks agreeably to  
 what, when he expresses himself thus against  
 the *Luciferian*; *Novam rem asseris ut quisquam*  
*Christianus factus sit ab eo qui non fuit Chri-*  
*stianus*: "Tis wholly new, to maintain, That  
 any One should be made a Christian, by  
 one who himself never was a Christian."  
 The Argument from *St. Paul's* being call'd  
 miraculously to be an Apostle, before he was  
 baptized; is just as if One should plead, That  
 Confirmation may be good to a Child that was  
 never Christen'd, because the first Converted  
 Gentiles received the *Holy-Ghost* before they  
 were Baptized.

F I N I S.

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